

INCREASE OF FORCE, ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT.

JUNE 2, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. HULL, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 10561.]

The Committee on Military Affairs have had under consideration the question of increasing the force in the Ordnance Department, and report the accompanying bill, and recommend the passage of the same.

It makes an increase of 1 colonel, 1 lieutenant-colonel, 2 majors, 4 captains, and 4 first-lieutenants—a total of 12 officers.

The accompanying letters from Gen. D. W. Flagler, Chief of Ordnance, and Hon. R. A. Alger, Secretary of War, are herewith submitted.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, May 28, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Ordnance, United States Army, dated May 26, 1898, together with draft of a bill providing for an increase in the number of officers of the Ordnance Corps.

The duties devolving upon this branch of the service at this time are fully stated by the Chief of Ordnance, and in view of the importance of the work and the urgent need of an increase in force, the legislation requested is earnestly recommended to the favorable consideration of Congress.

Very respectfully,

R. A. ALGER,
Secretary of War.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

OFFICE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE, UNITED STATES ARMY,
Washington, May 26, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith for your action a proposed bill for increasing the number of officers of the Ordnance Department from 54 to 66, and, if approved by you, to recommend that the same may be submitted to Congress with the recommendation that it be enacted into law.

For the interests of the service and of the country I deem it my duty to urgently recommend that the increase asked for be made.

The necessity for this increase is, briefly, as follows:

The number of officers of the Department is now insufficient for the proper performance of the duties imposed on the Department. The expense due to the increase

of officers asked for is inconsiderable compared with the loss and injury to be apprehended from a lack of sufficient officers for the performance of the duties of the Department.

The increase asked for is for the smallest number required for the regular and permanent duties of the Department, and is not asked for because of the great amount of work imposed upon the Department at this particular time.

Prior to nine years ago it can be safely stated that the number of officers of the Department was barely sufficient for the duties performed by them. During the last nine years, in consequence of the work of preparing our coast defense armament, and the changes in arms, equipments, and artillery of all kinds, requiring the services of technical and carefully trained officers, the labors of these officers have been certainly doubled. I have hesitated to ask for this increase because of the hope or belief that when the principal part of the above armament should be completed the amount of the official labor would be diminished. The experiences of the last few years and careful thought convinces me that this will not be the case. The work will continue for many years, and even should it be completed, the perhaps even more difficult work of maintaining the armament at all times in perfect condition, and for effecting the improvements necessary for maintaining an efficiency equal to that of other nations, is likely to increase rather than diminish the necessity for carefully trained officers.

For rendering the services of the officers efficient, or even available, careful and thorough scientific and technical education and practical experience in the duties of the Department, and especially on the work of construction in shops for several years, is imperatively necessary. The duties can not be intrusted to officers who have not been so prepared.

For many years there has been an insufficient number of officers for the performance of the duties at all the ordnance establishments, an insufficient number for the inspection and contract work at private establishments, and it has been impossible to spare a single officer for staff duty at headquarters of military departments where the interests of the service urgently demand the service of such officers.

I do not describe the difficulties under which the Department is now laboring from its inability to furnish officers for the performance of the still more important duties of the Department with the troops in the field, because this increase is asked for as a permanent establishment, except to say that if the Department had these officers now shift might be made to spare a few for the very important field service.

I believe it would be difficult to overstate the necessity for the increase of officers asked for. After attempting to state it, I find that the above language conveys an inadequate representation of the necessity.

Very respectfully,

D. W. FLAGLER,
Brig. Gen., Chief of Ordnance.

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

A BILL to increase the force of the Ordnance Department.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section five of chapter four hundred and fifty-eight of Statutes at Large shall be amended to read as follows:

The Ordnance Department shall consist of one Chief of Ordnance, with the rank, pay, and emoluments of a brigadier-general, four colonels, five lieutenant-colonels, twelve majors, twenty-four captains, twenty first lieutenants; and all vacancies which may hereafter exist in the grade of first lieutenant in said Department shall be filled by transfer from the line of the Army: *Provided*, That no appointment or promotion in said Department shall hereafter be made until the officer or person so appointed or promoted shall have passed a satisfactory examination before a board of ordnance officers senior to himself.